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554 565 are the basic factors in social differentiation, while differences in wealth, education, and living standards distinguish individuals but not cohesive social groups.

SEX AND AGE

562 Sex and age differences are the basic factors in the ascription of status and in the structuring of inter-personal relations. Male superiority is accepted as part of the [593] order of things. Women are expected to show deference and respect to men; wives to husbands, sisters to brothers. Sexual differentials are marked in the rearing of children, in the division of labor, and in the privileges and responsibilities of individuals at each stage of the life cycle. Men assume all important leadership roles, economic, political, social, and religious. The double standard in sexual relations is practiced by men, and is generally accepted by women. However, women have comparatively high status; they may own and inherit property, participate in religious life, and as mothers enjoy an important role within the home.

561 192 [195] The principle of respect for age is second only to that of male superiority. Young people must address older people by the respectful *Vd.*, and in turn are addressed by the more familiar *tú*. The basic age divisions or statuses recognized in the village are five: (1) *criatura* (infant), until about age two or weaning time; (2) *niño* (child), from two to about twelve; (3) *jóvenes, muchacho, muchacha,* or señorita, from about twelve until marriage; (4) *adulto* or *hombre* (man) and *mujer* (woman), from marriage in the case of a man, and after having one or two children in the case of a young married girl; (5) *anciano* or *viejo* (the aged).

858 The infant status is by far the most privileged. Infants get a great deal of attention and care. Notwithstanding the widespread preference for boys, there are practically no sexual differentials in the treatment accorded infants.

[856] [867] [868] The child status is an extended one, and the development of the child is viewed as a slow process which must not be unduly hurried. In the early years the child is expected to learn the all-important virtues of obedience and respect for parents, older siblings, and other adults. Responsibilities and work are assumed earlier by girls than by boys, but in both cases it is generally gradual. Nevertheless, the period of childhood is a relatively difficult one. It is a time when punishments are given, when play must be gradually restricted and finally eliminated. It is also the period of greatest demands and least rewards.

882 The period of youth is the time when both boys and girls assume adult work roles. They are not viewed as adults, however, and do their work under the supervision of their parents. The sexual differentials in this stage are very sharp, and boys have much more personal freedom than girls. This period of youth is generally longer for boys than girls, since the latter marry earlier. Young men, however, may not hold public office or be entrusted with positions of responsibility in the barrio.

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121 554 565 tive modes of life and cultural expressions corresponding to them, that draws class apart from class, gives cohesion to each class and stratifies a whole society." Cf. Robert M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, *Society* (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1949), p. 349. It will become apparent to the reader that Tepoztlán has no classes in the above sense. However, in terms of the Warner approach, many classes and subclasses might be found in Tepoztlán.

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Children tend to be preoccupied with food. Food was a recurrent theme in all the psychological tests, and boys particularly seem to think and talk about food a good deal. In the written themes, boys and girls invariably mentioned that they liked their parents because they provided them with food and other necessities, that they liked certain relatives because they gave them good things to eat, and that they liked fiestas because then they could eat *mole*. Many said that the worst thing that had ever happened to them was when their mothers did not have money to make *mole* or some other favorite dish. Boys wrote that they wanted to marry someone who was a good cook, and the thing they liked best about their mothers was that they cooked well. Thematic apperception stories also contained a good deal about food. 261 159

Boys, more than girls, tend to be fussy about food, although they like the food that makes up the family daily fare and do not refuse to eat it. They are sensitive about the order in which they are served, the size of their portion, the way in which the food is cooked, and the manner in which it is given to them. Eldest sons or favorite sons easily become angry and sometimes throw down their food, plate and all, or refuse to eat. In this they follow the pattern of their fathers who do the same thing when they are angry. 261 865

Girls may cry quietly or throw their food to the animals if they are not pleased with what they are given, but most often they suppress their feelings. The tendency of mothers to serve larger portions and choicer food to their favorite child is a source of quarrels and resentment. Many mothers give more food to the younger children because "the others are already big and the little ones need it more." On the other hand, grown sons who work are given more food than children still in school. Some children complain that their mothers do not cook well, and we know of a few cases in which the mother neglects to prepare meals from time to time. Food is also withheld as a punishment. Taking food without permission is called stealing and is punished. Despite this, children frequently steal food, and some mothers say that they cannot leave even a bit of sugar without it disappearing. Children also now commonly beg for food or for centavos to buy candy or fruit. 865 858 578 861 685

Tepoztecans tend to be secretive about food. Women do not discuss with each other what their families are going to eat that day nor what they bought at the market. Market baskets are generally kept carefully covered from prying eyes. There is also some fear of food sorcery, and, except for fiesta meals, Tepoztecans prefer to eat within the safety of their own homes. One family, in which the young son attends school daily in Cuernavaca, complained that he must eat cold, stiff tortillas and cold beans for lunch. When asked why he doesn't eat at one of the many inexpensive restaurants the mother answered that it would be dangerous because someone might "put something in his food." Persons who have known enemies will generally not accept food from anyone outside their own household. 261 754

Tepoztecans, like most other Mexicans, believe that food can be classified into two types, hot and cold (which has no relationship to temperature), and that under certain conditions only one or the other type should be eaten. In general, cold foods 261 262

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291 855 of acculturation of the family, barrio residence, and, to a greater degree than among adults, upon the family's economic status. Other factors affecting children's dress are school attendance and favoritism at home.

291 855 858 The younger a child is, the less effort and money is expended on his clothing and the less significance his clothing has in revealing economic status. In most families, pre-school children are not as well dressed as children who go to school. The only exception to this is the young favorite child of a better-to-do family. A favorite son may be given a little *gabán* as early as three years of age, but most boys do not receive *gabanes* until they begin to go out into the fields. A favorite girl may be given a little *rebozo* as soon as she asks for one, but generally girls receive a *rebozo* at about eight or nine. In very poor families a girl might not be given a *rebozo* until eleven or thereabouts. A favorite girl may receive a pair of gold earrings or a pair of holiday shoes at the age of two or three. Most girls do not receive these before they are fifteen; boys are given huaraches when they begin to work in the fields. [556] Sweaters are worn by children of better-to-do families only.

291 855 [872] [178] Parents tend to keep their school children's clothing cleaner and in better repair. Many also make some attempt to keep children dressed in the prevailing styles for their age group. This usually means shorter, better-fitting dresses for the girls, jackets and ready-made pants for boys. (See Fig. 47.) There is also a definite trend among families with enough means to buy children's shoes for special events and school fiestas. The school now places some pressure upon parents to provide shoes for their children by forbidding the latter to join public school parades if they are barefoot. Differences in the clothing of the children of the rich and poor and of the [554] more conservative and acculturated are becoming more marked and school children are becoming aware of the social distinctions involved. Their responses to the thematic apperception cards show school children to be particularly sensitive to clothing and to make appearance a significant aspect of their stories.

291 511 The quantity of clothing owned varies considerably from individual to individual. Even within the same family there is some variation. In general, youths and adolescent girls have the most and finest clothing, and the very young and very old have the least. In the poorest families each member may have only one dress or suit of clothing, but this is not common in Tepoztlán. Most women have at least two cotton dresses for daily wear and one rayon dress for fiestas; most men own at least four shirts, four *calzones*, and one or two pairs of huaraches. The children of the [735] poor tend to have less than this minimum and frequently do not have special clothing for fiestas. In contrast, the middle and upper economic groups have many clothes, and among a few families there is evidence of extravagance in dress.

[292]

DIVERSION

796 [527] [517] Fiestas, both religious and secular, continue to be the main source of diversion for all groups in Tepoztlán. Every year the church calendar provides at least sixty-two important fiestas for Tepoztecans to celebrate, either as participants or observers. Not a month passes without a fiesta, and in some months there are five.

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12 *the quality of inter-personal relations:*

TEPOZTECANS are not an easy people to get to know; they are not an outgoing or expressive people. Most inter-personal relations are characterized by reserve, constriction, and carefully guarded behavior. Spontaneous or informal behavior is limited to the most intimate relationships and rarely occurs in public. Tepoztecans do not like to attract attention by word or deed, and self-control is learned early. In the presence of adults, children are expected to be unobtrusive.[1] In large public gatherings of adults and children, there is a minimum of noise. A family whose quarrels or boisterousness can be heard by passers-by soon earns a poor reputation.

In the street, most faces are somber and quiet; smiles, brief and appropriate; hearty laughter, rare. Women and girls are expected to walk with eyes downcast and those who smile freely may be suspected of being flippant and flirtatious. Adolescent girls, in particular, must have good facial control, for even a glance of interest may be taken as a sign of encouragement by some hopeful male. To smile unnecessarily at other people's infants is to be suspected of the evil eye, and most children do not learn to smile at strangers or visitors until they attend school.

Correct behavior is important at all times, at home, with friends, with relatives, and in public. Only in the case of old people and men who are drunk are deviations from customary reserve tolerated. Nevertheless, men recovering from drunkenness are apt to worry over having committed some improper act, such as behaving disrespectfully to a *compadre*. For this reason, men are careful about choosing drinking companions; individuals in a respect-relation, such as father and son, uncle and nephew, and *compadres*, must never drink together.

There are no fiestas in Tepoztlán which are openly bacchanalian in character, or in which women as well as men become drunk and promiscuous as in some other parts of Mexico. Even at the Carnaval, when Tepoztecans behave with relative freedom, the leading participants are disguised in masks and costumes, and whatever love-making takes place is done secretly.

[1] Only during the recreation hour in school do children make a great deal of noise and play wildly. The play pattern in school is in sharp contrast with that at home and is clearly out of keeping with the older culture pattern.

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of money. But only the most aggressive wives try to break their husbands of the habit. 273

Drinking is an important emotional outlet for men. It is believed that drinking helps one to get over *susias*, and it is traditional for men to go out to drink after a quarrel at home. Sometimes the men come home drunk and aggressive; other times "because they lack judgment" they arrive full of affection and kiss and caress the members of the family. It is interesting that only under intoxication will husbands and fathers openly demonstrate their affection in this way. Repressed hostilities toward wife, mother, child, or others also frequently come out when a man has been drinking. Some husbands beat their wives only when drunk. Drinking to get courage to punish a wife, seduce a woman, or attack an enemy is also common. Men often give a particular shout or cry *"grita"* after drinking, to show that they feel brave. 593 154 152 154

Although women in Tepoztlán are not supposed to drink, a few women are known to drink regularly and have been seen in a drunken state. Drunken women often cry for hours at a time and are inconsolable. In contrast to men, they do not respond to intoxication with aggression or impulsiveness but with self-pity. Widows or abandoned wives, more than other women, tend to drink for comfort. A few modern young girls get together occasionally for drinking and smoking in secret, but they discontinue this after marriage. 273 154 589 276

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The relations between parents and children in Tepoztlán are also conditioned by emphasis on respect and authority. Children are reared to respect and obey their elders and to submit to the will of their mother and father so long as they live under the parental roof. Not long ago, all children in Tepoztlán kissed the hands of their parents, grandparents, and godparents in greeting; now only a few families continue this custom, and children are embarrassed to do it in the presence of outsiders. In the smaller outlying villages in the municipio, hand-kissing is still a common practice. 593 576 178

From infancy on, children in Tepoztlán are encouraged to be quiet, passive, and unobtrusive; older children are required to be obedient, self-controlled, and helpful. There is great emphasis placed upon "good" behavior in children, and the possibility of a child "not turning out well" is one of the fears of Tepoztecan parents. It is feared that a child who is badly raised will not be a good worker and will get into trouble. Such a child reflects ill upon his parents and is a cause for shame. 593 858

The responsibility of child rearing is felt as a heavy burden, particularly by mothers. Upon the death of a small child, it is not uncommon for the mother to comfort herself with the statement, "It is better thus, for who knows if he would have turned out well."

While both parents are held responsible by society at large for the care and conduct of their children, within the home the major burden falls upon the mother. It is the mother who feeds, bathes, and clothes the children and cares for them 593 855

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any manifestation of independence is taken to be disrespectful of the parent; for others, only disobedience to a direct command and a show of aggression toward the parents are cause for punishment. Also, the varying requirements for the assistance of children in the home, favoritism, and the different status of boys and girls and older and younger children make for variation in parental treatment.

Fear is the principal technique by which parents control their children. Fear of punishment is widespread, and parents who have successfully instilled this fear in their children are considered good parents. It is believed that too much kindness or softness spoils children and that they may grow up without knowing respect and fear.

There is a tradition of severe punishment in Tepoztlán. In the past, children were more repressed and were sometimes brutally punished for slight offenses. Tepoztecans recall such punishments as hanging a child in a net over a smoky fire of chile seeds to asphyxiate him partially and to make him ill for days.[8] Similarly if a child broke a dish, he might be punished by scraping his arms with a piece of the broken dish until he bled. It may be that these old practices had some magical aspects and were not done in a spirit of cruelty, but it is significant that they are interpreted as cruel today.

About forty years ago, children were painfully whipped at school and at home with *la disciplina*, a rope which had five, fingerlike extensions. This is no longer used. Not so long ago if a teacher or a neighbor accused a child of some misbehavior, the child was often beaten by his father in the presence of the accuser. Now, it is said, parents more often tend to find fault with the accuser than with the child. In the past, almost any adult could punish a child, but non-relatives no longer do this for fear of starting a family quarrel. Tepoztecans generally agree that punishment has become more lenient, and that there is more toleration of childish faults and whims, particularly among younger or more educated parents.

Our data show wide variations in the form of punishment and in the degree of severity. It is clear that children between the ages of five and twelve are frequently punished, but for children over twelve, physical punishment is reserved for the most serious offenses. The father generally inflicts the most severe punishments, but the mother punishes more often. In most families the father is more feared and more promptly obeyed, even though he may have punished his children only once or twice. Usually a rise in his voice will get quick response from his child. Mothers tend to punish their daughters more than their sons, but fathers punish their sons more than their daughters. Girls generally receive more punishment than boys and are made tractable at an earlier age.

Punishment usually does not begin until the child starts to walk, and it is limited to a slap on the hands or buttocks. Some mothers slap the hands of a nine-month-old baby if he touches a forbidden object, and others may spank a baby hard if he cries too much. However, punishment during infancy is not common. When toilet

[8] This practice is reminiscent of the Aztec form of punishing rebellious subjects by placing them in a room filled with fumes of burning chile seeds.

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obligation of the sons to find him and help him home. Fathers may experience some shame, primarily because of the fear that they may not have behaved well while drunk.

The relations of a father with his daughters are not very different from his relations with his sons. Although fathers prefer to have sons to daughters, favoritism toward a daughter is not uncommon. As the son grows older and is able to work in the fields, his contacts with his father become more frequent, but those with the older daughter become more distant and formal. Physical contact between father and daughter is even more avoided, and kissing or embracing has strong incestuous connotations. Young girls are often extremely shy in the presence of their fathers, and married women have stated that they were embarrassed to be seen by their fathers when pregnant.

Fathers expect their daughters to avoid all contact with the opposite sex and to be virgins until marriage. Any trespass against this is taken to be a blow against his honor and that of the family, and incurs his most severe punishment. A father sometimes forces a wayward daughter to leave home or does not speak to her for several years. Girls are very fearful of their father's attitude in this, but nevertheless almost always have a secret sweetheart. Although Tepoztecans explain the father's wrath as jealousy, what is meant is jealousy of his respect status rather than jealousy of his daughter's lover. The lover is considered so lacking in respect for the father that he dares to flaunt the father's will. A rich man is doubly outraged and will often go to great expense and trouble to punish the boy.

Grown daughters may take over their mother's duties in serving the father, and sometimes strong ties of affection between father and daughter develop as a result. There are many cases of fathers favoring their eldest daughter and secretly providing her with gifts because of her devotion in serving him. This is particularly true of a widower whose eldest daughter fills the place of the deceased mother. Incest between father and daughter is not infrequently suspected in such a situation.

In one case, a widower lived alone with his nineteen-year-old daughter, who did all the work of a wife. The daughter had the reputation of being *loca* and having had many *novios* when younger. After the death of her mother, she no longer had *novios* and kept to the house. Her father dressed her well and gave her all the money she wanted, and people began to suspect them of having incestuous relations. A neighbor claimed to have seen them in the act of sexual intercourse and reported that the girl was pregnant. One day she saw the girl bury something in the corral and notified the authorities, who found that it was the fetus of a child. The girl was sentenced to prison for one year, but her father, who was prosperous, sold some animals and bought her freedom. His solicitude in bringing her food and in arranging for her release contrasted sharply with the traditional fury of the father at a wayward daughter, and was taken to be further evidence of their illicit relations.

Although it is believed that it is the duty of the children to take care of the father when he can no longer work, there is a widespread feeling that children cannot be relied on, and that death is preferable to a dependent old age.

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593 858 Mothers, more than fathers, tend to demonstrate favoritism among their children, and favor boys over girls and small children over grown children. (See Fig. 52.) Mothers tend to be more indulgent and permissive toward their sons. From early childhood, boys are permitted more freedom of movement and expression and more leisure for play. Mothers punish boys less often and make fewer demands on

[142 291 516]

Fig. 52. Tepoztecan mother and sons.

them. Mothers assume a protective attitude toward the son working in the field and sometimes think that the father is expecting too much. However, only an occasional mother interferes on the boy's behalf.

It is common for a mother to favor the youngest child in the family, and she may continue to nurse him and sleep with him much longer than the usual period. The indulgence of the youngest child is often in sharp contrast with the treatment of other children in the family, but mothers commonly favor all children under five or thereabouts. They are given more food, choicer food, toys are bought for them, and they are taken along to fiestas and on visits and trips.

The oldest son also enjoys a favored position in many ways. He is more indulged than subsequent sons and receives more care and attention. His is often the only [527] birthday among the children to be celebrated by a fiesta. A mother looks forward to the day her eldest son marries and brings a daughter-in-law to assist her. One

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mother proudly displayed a pillowcase she had embroidered with the words, "Sleep, my love" for her eighteen-year-old son. But mothers experience some difficulty in controlling the eldest son, who frequently imitates his father in demanding much service from the women in the family and in ordering his younger siblings about. The oldest son is expected to take the place of the father upon the latter's death, and to support his widowed mother and orphaned brothers and sisters. When this occurs, there is sometimes an extended struggle between the mother and the son for authority as head of the family. Widows who inherited their husband's property are in a better position to maintain authority and are usually careful to hold on to the property until death, for fear of losing all control of their sons. Propertyless widows, whose sons work as peons to support the family, usually permit the sons to rule over their brothers and sisters and over their mothers as well. Quarrels between mothers and sons arising out of the question of authority and inheritance are not infrequent; many mothers voice apprehension as to the treatment they may expect from their sons in their old age. There are several instances in which married sons do nothing to help support an old widowed mother or even mistreat her. On the other hand, there are several cases in the village in which an adult son, married or unmarried, continues to live with the mother and to work for her, sometimes well into his thirties, before receiving a share of his inheritance.

Many widows do not remarry because "the children get angry." Grown children tend to resent sharing the mother with a stranger and fear that they will be displaced. Eldest sons are known to be especially angered or "jealous," because they will no longer be the male head of the family. One widow said her eighteen-year-old son threatened to beat her if she remarried. Some women express a sense of shame in taking another husband after their children are grown. The presence of grown children also act as a deterrent to widows having lovers.

The relations of mothers and daughters are usually very close. Not only does the mother teach the girl the household skills she knows, but they work side by side in the home until the daughter's marriage. The daughter gradually assumes the mother's role in the home and generally identifies with her. The mother's attitude toward her work, toward bearing children, and toward men and marriage becomes the girl's attitude. In homes in which the mother is dissatisfied or unhappy with her husband, the daughters are apt to take a negative attitude toward men and marriage.

With few exceptions, mothers press their daughters into service as early as possible and use them for all types of errands and chores; indeed, the way in which Tepoztecan households function makes it almost impossible for the mother to get along without help. The custom of having daughters work in the home is deeply ingrained in Tepoztlán, although less so than in the smaller surrounding villages. Many mothers resent the fact that the school takes away the girls for the major part of the day. Mothers frequently absent their daughters from school or withdraw them permanently as soon as the husband permits. Girls under the age of thirteen usually prefer to be in school and may resist the mother's attempt to keep them

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854 the left arm with one end of the *rebozo* tightly tucked around the child's body and the other end brought around the mother's shoulders and also tucked under the [171] child. This makes the child snug and takes some of his weight off the mother's arm. Tepoztecans regard carrying a child on the back as primitive and associate it [735] with poverty, because a poor woman needs both hands free to work. Most children are quiet, passive, and content as long as they are being carried. The child's arms are free if he is past swaddling age, but his ability to move is relatively limited. Many mothers say that as long as there is someone to carry the child they prefer him to be carried, otherwise he gets dirty, touches things, and demands the mother's attention.

The majority of mothers have someone to assist them in taking care of their small children. The assistant may be an older child, a grandmother, a niece, the daughter of a neighbor, or a young girl hired for the purpose. Most often the assistant is an older brother or sister, who may also be a small child. The practice [857] of giving over the infant, from the age of four months on, to a child-nurse is almost universal in Tepoztlán, and infants early come into contact with people other than the mother.

854 Under the best conditions, the infant is cared for by the oldest daughter, who 857 may be thirteen years of age or over and who has had experience in the care of children. This sister often is an adequate mother substitute, and a close, affectionate relationship may develop between the girl and the infant. But frequently the infant is given over to the care of an eight- or nine-year-old, or one even younger, who sometimes resents the role of nurse. Sometimes children, particularly boys, run off into the street when they are told to take care of the baby. The child-nurse is expected to carry the baby about, usually in the patio and sometimes in the street. The baby may not be taken far away, in case he cries and wants to nurse. If the baby is hurt or becomes ill, the child-nurse is blamed and often punished.

For example, a seven-year-old girl was taking care of her seven-month-old brother while the mother went to the plaza. The baby awoke from sleep and began to cry. The little girl took him out in the street to divert him but neglected to cover him well. That night the baby had a fever, and six days later he died of pneumonia. The mother blamed the girl for the death of the baby but did not punish her because "she had only wanted to keep the baby from crying." But the little girl cried a great deal because of the things her mother had said to her. A large number of children, particularly girls, receive severe punishment because of accidents which occur while they are taking care of younger brothers and sisters.

854 A first-born or favorite child, or a child in a more acculturated family, often 858 receives different treatment than other children. In addition to more solicitous, indulgent, and affectionate care, these children are unswaddled earlier, not carried as much after they can walk, and are permitted more freedom to walk and play where they wish. They are followed about by their grandmother, nurse, or even their father, or some other indulgent member of the family, and carefully watched. They are often allowed to play with many objects, usually forbidden; get dirty with-

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out being scolded; have more opportunities to exercise initiative; make choices; and develop their individuality. Such children also receives rattles, balls, dolls, wagons, etc., which the majority of small children in Tepoztlán do without. One of the wealthier families bought a toy automobile with pedals for a favorite grandchild, but large expenditures such as this are extremely rare. Even in poor families, there is indulgence toward the favorite child. In one very poor family, for example, the oldest daughter had no textbook for school because her mother had permitted the baby brother, a favorite child, to tear it up. This type of indulgence is unusual, because most Tepoztecan families are careful not to permit children to damage property.

There is little preoccupation with toilet training, and there is no conventional method or set time to accomplish it. There is almost no effort made to control urination during the first two years. If an infant tends to urinate too frequently, it is believed that the spleen is "cold" and should be warmed by an application of unguent of *ateo* and hot tallow. Bathing the child in the *temascal* is another form of treatment.

Although expressions of disgust at having to clean up bowel movements are frequent, these do not appear to be related to any deep-seated repulsion. It is the rare mother who is persistent or methodical in training her children early in bowel control. Only two informants displayed any compulsion concerning toilet training and followed a rigid procedure with their children from the age of six months. It is the more acculturated mothers who give earlier and consistent attention to toilet training.

Most mothers take their children to the corral with them two or three times a day when the children are able to walk well. Before that time, children are scolded when they soil themselves and "are called 'little pig,' so that they will be ashamed." By the time children are sixteen months or two years of age, many mothers begin to spank them hard enough to make them cry for doing their "necessities" in the wrong place. At two, some children ask to have their pants removed and can go to the corral alone. Some are able to clean themselves with a stone or leaf or paper at this age. When a child is able to tie and untie his pants, usually by four or five, he is able to go independently. After age four, children are no longer permitted to accompany their mothers to the corral.

There is a tendency for mothers to be more lenient with boys, especially favorites, than with girls in toilet training, with the result that girls are trained earlier. They are spanked and scolded more consistently and harshly, and are required to be less demanding of assistance. Boys between the ages of two and five are occasionally seen playing in the patio naked from the waist down, but more "correct" people consider it very improper to permit boys to play without pants.

Infancy ends with weaning. A child who is nursed for less than two years is generally considered to be deprived. Most mothers nurse their infants until they know that they are again pregnant, which may not be until the fifth month after conception. It is a widespread belief that it is harmful to the child to nurse while

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862 the mother is pregnant, but many mothers do not wean the child until he shows definite symptoms of becoming ill. If weaning due to a new pregnancy occurs before two years, the mother and father are said to be inconsiderate of their infant. Weaning at one year sometimes occurs because the mother is ill or has insufficient milk. Although women frequently complain that they become thin and tired when they nurse, or that they receive painful bites, they rarely wean a child for these reasons. A few mothers regularly wean their children at eighteen months. Weaning may be delayed in the case of a favorite child, to avoid making him cry.

[858]

One mother, who suffered from sore nipples, decided to wean her three-year-old son while her husband was away. When her husband came home that night he became angry and said that if the boy cried, the mother would receive a beating. Many people believe that the longer a child is nursed, the stronger he will be. It is not uncommon for the youngest and last child to be nursed as long as he wishes, sometimes for four or five years. Some believe, however, that after two years of nursing, the child begins to drink the mother's blood "like a bat," and that nursing a child too long will make him stupid.

When the mother decides to wean the child she places a bitter substance (*sávila*) on the nipple, often in the child's presence, and tells him that her breast is sore and that he may no longer nurse. Some mothers wean *por derecho*, that is by binding the breasts and not permitting the child to see them again. But many do not bind the breasts for several days, and if the child cries or begs hard he is given the breast so that he "will not be angry" with the mother. If the child continues to nurse despite the *sávila*, a more bitter substance (*prodigiosa*)[5] is applied. Today, bicarbonate of soda, iodine, alcohol, etc., are also used. A child is considered difficult to wean if he continues to nurse despite the "medicines" applied. Crying, even if prolonged over eight days, is viewed as a normal part of weaning. In general, the younger the child the more difficult he is to wean. A delicate or sickly child may be treated more gently, by gradually reducing the number of nursings for eight or fifteen days before weaning is begun, but few women do this. Since so many children are nursed for at least two years, most of them are weaned in a few days. Few mothers consider weaning difficult.

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Many women have a great deal of milk, and their breasts are painful during weaning. Some express the milk with their hands to relieve the pain, others cannot and must rely on binding. Hot alcohol is rubbed on the breasts and back, or heated tortillas are placed on the breasts, to ease the pain. Another technique is to heat the *tejolote* (pestle) and rub the breast with it. It is believed that nursing should not be resumed once the breasts are bound because the milk changes and acts as a purgative. When milk is expressed, it is generally buried in the earth in a place where the ants will not get to it so that the mother will have a good supply of milk for her next baby. Some women express the milk into a cloth and throw it over the roof for the same reason.

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[5] *Colocasantus.*